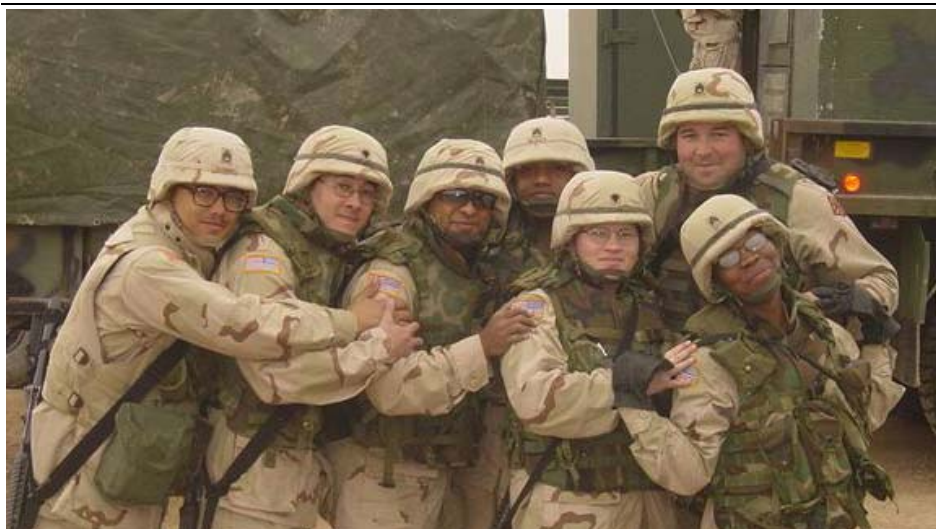


# 29th Signal Battalion

Family Newsletter • Issue 1 • February 2004

## Message from the Commander



Family members of the 29<sup>th</sup>.... GREETINGS from the Great Northwest, or shall I say, Middle East. ☺

Several people have contributed to taking lots of pictures. We are going to try and put them all together, if not, we will send a few different emails with all the pictures attached.

It all began with the Flight. Depending on which flight your loved one took, they had First Class seats and one long flight or they had regular seats, that were smaller than most peoples hips with four stops. Stops were made in Alaska, Greece, Italy, and finally Kuwait.

Most of us enjoyed the flights and most slept for the entire 25 hour journey!

Good thing too, because once we hit the ground, we had briefings, then another journey and have been training for our journey ever since.

The toughest part of any deployment is always the transition, so once we get to where we are going, life will be a whole lot better! That is guaranteed!!

They serve four meals a day where we are right now, breakfast, lunch, dinner and Midnight. They have MWR facilities, a weight room, showers, and

the tents where we sleep ( you can see in the pictures) have both heating and air conditioning.

The pictures show everything from the plane ride here to current training. You will see that everything you do at home, you can do right here in the desert too. That is the amazing thing about technology and the greatest Army in the world. We can deploy any place, anytime and have power, showers, latrines, and the comforts of home too.

You will see soldiers playing EA Sports, cleaning weapons (which is popular because of all the dust), you will see the living areas (some neater than others) and you will see the motor pool and soldiers working night and day to ensure vehicles are in as good a shape as they ever have been so that there will be NO breakdowns whatsoever and everybody makes it to our final destination without incident!!!

You will see soldiers receiving classes on Explosives so they know what the threat is, they know how to react once they recognize it and Convoy procedures. During our Training this week we will conduct Real life training to put what we have learned through classes into real life.

Lieutenant Colonel Dan Kestle

The bottom line is your soldiers are receiving the finest training they have ever received, the finest parts and equipment, and the utmost time to prepare for a safe journey to our final destination.

Once we get there, we have some excellent facilities awaiting us!!!

Some of the soldiers heading home that have just come from there have said that it is a four star location, meaning.... DON'T WORRY! We have great places to work and sleep, we have a marvelous Dining facility, and the best Morale Welfare and Recreation place in all of Iraq, plus what we have brought with us!!!!

In closing this first of many updates to you, from here....we are all safe and sound, and preparing for our journey to our final destination and everything is looking great! Your soldiers have good attitudes, they are motivated and are the finest soldiers in our Army.

Your support and prayers are appreciated and we all want you to know how much we appreciate your support. You are our HOPE!

Once we get to our final destination we will send you another update with pictures. Until then, God Bless and Thanks again for being our Anchor.

Pictures: [www.lewis.army.mil/29thsigbn/](http://www.lewis.army.mil/29thsigbn/)

### Calendar Items

February 17 ..... C Co. FRG Meeting  
6:30 PM C Co. Classroom

March 12-13 ..... Women's Conference  
[www.lewisfamilyfocus.com](http://www.lewisfamilyfocus.com)  
Register through Feb 13  
Reserve Childcare in advance

## Handling the Stress of Family Separation

CH (LTC) Norman E. Wear

What causes stress in life? Some of the causes listed in the textbooks could also be lifted right out of a description of military families in deployment: financial problems, relationship problems, separation from loved ones, rebellious children, unresolved issues with spouse, pressure to perform, desire to please someone...

Being suddenly alone with all the responsibility that was formerly shared with someone else can be very stressful. And while stress can cause us problems, we need to also recognize that not all stress is bad. Stress keeps us going; it motivates us, and can lead to growth. The important thing is to recognize that stress can be handled in both negative and positive ways.

### HOW DO WE HANDLE STRESS IN NEGATIVE WAYS?

- *Try harder* – we try to do more of the same, faster and harder; but it results in more of the same.
- *Withdrawal* – we try to handle it alone, keep it inside, the “I can make it myself” approach.
- *Substance abuse* – we use alcohol and drugs to escape reality.

- *Violence* – we vent our stress energy on others, especially family (the ones we love).
- *Money* – we overspend money in an attempt to soothe our hurts or increase our self-esteem.
- *Work More* – start earlier in the day, skip exercise and lunch, or work on weekends.
- *Sex* – we try to find pleasure in sex with the inappropriate people.

### HOW CAN WE HANDLE STRESS IN POSITIVE WAYS?

- *Exercise* – expend nervous energy through walking, swimming, jogging, tennis, lifting, etc.
- *Eat Properly* – keep calories under control and reduce sugar intake.
- *Practice Relaxation* – slow down during the day, release tight muscles, breath slowly and deeply.
- *Read Books* – pick enjoyable books that capture your attention.
- *Organize your Time* – prioritize, stay on track, avoid chaos, plan free time and time for yourself.
- *Seek Quality* – take time to do a few things well, rather than many things done haphazardly.
- *Be Flexible* – allow for plans to change, and don't box yourself in to just one way of doing things.

- *Creativity* – do something totally new that will break old ruts of activity—play, concert, museum.
- *Talk* – share your frustrations and stress with a friend, spouse, chaplain, parent, or counselor.
- *Pray* – spend time with God, and feel his care and support when things get hectic. Meet others at chapel.

Let's try to focus on the positive ways, and help each other do positive things as well. Perhaps the best thing one friend can do for another is get out for a walk together, even if it's raining. It won't hurt to get wet. We were wet the day we were born.

God bless you each and all,  
Chaplain Wear

### II II

#### Start a Family Night\*

Set aside a special night for the family once a week. Use this time to unite, play games, learn, and have fun together. Write letters, take pictures, draw pictures, and make special packages for your soldier. He will love knowing he was part of your weekly family night. Make it fun for everyone, including yourself

## Kate's Top Ten Self Care Tips

Kate Kestle

Deployments can be a bit like an emotional roller coaster. Now that we are on the other side of the departure there seems to be a new set of challenges, including going about daily life with a void left by the soldier in our family. It is especially important at this time to take a very good care of ourselves. The energy that we would normally focus on our soldier/spouse we care shift to our own needs. Here are some suggestions:

1. Reach out to other people for companionship. Try to release roadblocks like pride or seeing yourself as “different than those people.” Bottom line we are all in this together and have something to offer each other. FRG 9family readiness groups) are one way to connect with others.
  2. Call a friend or acquaintance to meet you for coffee.
  3. Ask someone to watch your kids for a couple of hours so you can take a warm, quiet bath by yourself or take for a walk. If you have young kids this is a must at least weekly! Try an older child next door to watch them while you are getting other things done in the house. Clarkmore CDC offers free childcare on Tuesday nights for children of deployed soldiers.
  4. Take five minutes with a blank sheet of paper and write down what you need. Don't judge what comes up just write.
  5. Walking just 20 minutes a day can significantly lift our mood. Yes, even in the northwest rain! Or find a workout buddy and hit the gym.
  6. Remember H.A.L.T. – do not let yourself get too hungry, too angry, too lonely, or too tired. These are the warning signs to take better care of ourselves. I have found that when I get impatient I am often dehydrated...drink water!
  7. Go to a craft store and take up a hobby. Michael's in Lakewood Town Center offers regular classes. Or the arts and crafts shop on post.
  8. Rent a movie and invite some neighbors over.
  9. Turn OFF THE NEWS! Radio is a great way to get the news without the dramatic impact of seeing pictures. Try NPR on FM 94.9 or 88.5. (Once a week is plenty)
  10. Paint your toenails flaming red and let them greet you first thing in the morning!
- At first it may seem selfish to prioritize ourselves first, but everyone around us benefits when we feel more relaxed and can smile a little easier. So make sure that you have something penned in on the calendar each week that you can look forward to just for you.